
FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions

By Mattie Mendoza and Phil Lockwood

Q: I've heard others refer to the term "MOA," and I vaguely understand that it has something to do with EMS providers responding in disaster situations. But, what exactly does MOA stand for, and as administrator of an EMS provider, what should I know about these MOAs?

A: MOA is the acronym for Memorandum of Agreement. It means parties promise to cooperatively work together on an agreed-upon project. In this case, it's an advance agreement for licensed Texas EMS providers to provide mutual aid in disaster situations, such as hurricanes. Currently, MOAs are in place for ground and rotor wing ambulances as well as for EMS personnel only. To review the terms of these DSHS MOAs, see www.dshs.state.tx.us/emstraumasystems/MOAPage.shtm.

Q: Who should sign an MOA?

A: Any qualifying provider with enough resources to assist fellow Texans while maintaining coverage in its own service area. Texas EMS providers must have at least 12 months experience as a provider of EMS to qualify (see other terms of the MOA at the above link). We encourage widespread participation because, during an actual disaster situation, DSHS may need services from a variety of geographical areas. For a list of providers who have a signed MOA

in place, see www.dshs.state.tx.us/emstraumasystems/moalist.shtm.

Q: What happens if a disaster hits our area? Could there be conflicts with existing mutual aid agreements?

A: DSHS does not plan to activate resources located in affected areas. Within a specific disaster area, EMS providers should work with their local government or through *local* mutual aid agreements. Once the local government resources are exhausted, state assistance can be requested. It is vital that EMS providers work with local governments to be part of the local disaster plan before a disaster hits.

Q: What are some examples of tasks we'd be required to do if we sign an MOA? Are some tasks optional?

A: The most prominent task under air and ground ambulance MOAs is evacuation of patients, either from state (state schools) or other (hospitals or nursing homes) facilities. Providers who specifically sign up for state facility evacuations must commit to having sufficient resources to respond when activated. Providers with fewer resources may opt for other missions for which they can turn down activation if unable to cover their own areas. Personnel MOAs call for personnel to provide air/ground coordination and field supervision of deployed

ambulances, or the staffing of buses for evacuating patients with special needs who don't require ambulance transport.

Q: Is special training required for the personnel of providers who sign MOAs?

A: It is recommended that all personnel receive fundamental Incident Command System training. Specialized field staff, such as strike team leaders, must receive intensive training outlined by FEMA.

Q: Can I wait until a disaster such as a hurricane is imminent before I sign an MOA?

A: Yes, but it's preferable that you sign up early so the response can be more effectively coordinated.

Q: I submitted my certification renewal application but received a deficiency notice that stated I needed to submit my current National Registry card to the EMS Certification unit. I faxed my National Registry card two days ago, but my status has not yet been updated on the website. How long does it take to process deficiency items that are faxed in?

A: Deficiency items are processed in the order in which they are received. The processing time for deficiency items is approximately two weeks. Faxing is usually the fastest way to get them to the EMS

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Certification unit, as it eliminates mailing time. Once you have faxed the information requested, if it has been longer than the normal processing time of two weeks, please call the EMS Certification unit at (512) 834-6700.

Q: I submitted my EMT renewal application just a few days past my expiration date, and I received a deficiency letter stating I need to submit a completed Verification of Skills Proficiency form. Where can I find this form and who needs to sign it?

A: According to Texas Administrative Code §157.34: (d) (2) Late recertification. A candidate whose certificate has been expired for 90 days or less may renew the certificate by submitting an application accompanied by a non-refundable renewal fee that is equal to 1-1/2 times the normally required application renewal fee for that level as listed in subsection (a)(4) of this section. Applicant shall meet one of the recertification options described in subsection (b) (1) - (5) of this section and submit verification of skills proficiency from an approved education program.
The Verification of Skills

Proficiency form can be found on the EMS and Trauma Systems website at www.dshs.state.tx.us/emstraumasystems/recertinfo.shtm#laterenewal, under late renewal. It must be signed by a Texas-certified EMS coordinator.

Q: I received a letter from DSHS stating that my application is under administrative review by the EMS Compliance department. What does this mean?

A: The letter informs you that an administrative review will be performed on your criminal history background by the EMS Compliance department because you either answered *yes* to one of questions in the criminal history section of the EMS application or because a criminal history background check revealed a record in your past. A criminal history check is performed on all EMS applications submitted to DSHS. For additional information regarding administrative reviews or criminal history background checks, please contact the EMS Compliance group at (512) 834-6700. You can also find information pertaining to criminal history evaluations on our website at www.dshs.state.tx.us/emstraumasystems/Qihome.shtm.

Q: Where can I get a list of EMS education programs in my area?

A: We're not able to maintain a list of individual ongoing EMS

courses due to the changing nature of EMS classes, but there are several ways you can track down an EMT school. First, you can find a training program (that holds multiple courses) through our online Public License Search by selecting "EMS Initial Training Program" and searching by city. This search may require broadband Internet access, as the search time may cause a "time-out" error when using dial-up access. The second way to search for a program is to download a database of currently approved initial EMS training programs from our website at www.dshs.state.tx.us/emstraumasystems/formsresources.shtm#OpenRecords (scroll down to EMS Education Programs). The third choice is to contact your local DSHS EMS field office for more assistance. See www.dshs.state.tx.us/emstraumasystems/regions.shtm for contact information for field offices throughout the state.



**Texas EMS
Conference
November 22-25
Fort Worth**